



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

TODD P. GRAVES

Contact Don Ledford, Public Affairs • (816) 426-4220 • 400 East Ninth Street, Room 5510 • Kansas City, MO 64106

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ELECTION OFFICER APPOINTED TO OVERSEE FEDERAL BALLOT ACCESS AND VOTING INTEGRITY INITIATIVE

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that Assistant United States Attorney J. Daniel Stewart, will lead the efforts of his office in the connection with the Justice Department's nationwide Election Day program for the upcoming Nov. 2, 2004 general elections.

Stewart has been appointed to serve as the District Election Officer for the Western District of Missouri, and in that capacity is responsible for overseeing the district's handling of complaints of election fraud and voting rights abuses in consultation with Justice Department headquarters.

Two years ago, in October of 2002, Attorney General John Ashcroft established a department-wide Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Initiative. The goals of this initiative are to increase the department's ability to deter election fraud and discrimination at the polls and to prosecute these offenses whenever and wherever they occur - to make voting easier and cheating harder. Both goals are equally important. It is imperative that in pursuing voter integrity, ballot access is not in any way diminished or harmed. The department's long-standing Election Day Program furthers the goals of the Initiative. The program also is intended to ensure public confidence in the integrity of the election process by providing local points of contact within the department where the public can report possible election fraud and voting rights violations while the polls are open on election day. The franchise is the cornerstone of American democracy. We all must ensure that those who are entitled to the franchise exercise it, while those who seek to corrupt it are brought to justice.

In order to respond to complaints of election fraud or voting rights abuses on Nov. 2, 2004, and to ensure that such complaints are directed to the appropriate authorities, Graves stated that Stewart will be on duty in this district while the polls are open. They can be reached by the public at the following telephone numbers: 816-426-3122 and 1-800-733-6558.

The FBI will also have special agents available in each field office and resident agency in this district to receive allegations of election fraud and other election abuses. The FBI can be reached by the public at 816-512-8200.

Complaints about ballot access problems or discrimination can be made directly to the Civil Rights Division's Voting Section in Washington at 1-800-253-3931 or 202-307-2767.

"Election fraud and voting rights abuses dilute the worth of votes honestly cast," Graves said. "They also corrupt the essence of our representative form of government. As crimes against both the individual and the government, they will be dealt with promptly and aggressively. Anyone who has information suggesting electoral corruption or voting rights abuses should make that information available immediately to my office, the FBI, or the Civil Rights Division."

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow